



MINISTRY OF WORKS

Third Report
of the Advisory Committee
on Forestry

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MINISTRY OF WORKS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

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MINISTRY OF WORKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

Third Report

To the Right Honourable Patrick Buchan-Hepburn, M.P.

Sir,

1. In our First and Second Reports we completed an arboricultural review of the Royal Parks in England and made recommendations designed to ensure continuity in the preservation of tree growth and consequent landscape effects. We are glad to note that the Ministry has made substantial progress in carrying out our recommendations. We propose from time to time to review the progress of this work, and to visit each of the Parks accordingly.

2. In particular we are glad to note that the first stage of thinning the trees in The Mall—removal of alternate trees in the roadside rows—has now been satisfactorily carried out (Second Report, Paragraph 8).

3. We have now visited a number of other areas in the care of the Ministry outside the Royal Parks, where there are problems of tree growth. These include Osborne House, Kenilworth Castle, Launceston Castle, Osterley Park, and Brompton Cemetery. Our recommendations for these areas are embodied in the present report.

4. We have given further attention to the critical problem of ensuring an adequate supply of well grown young trees to meet a carefully worked out planting programme over a period of years (First Report, Paragraph 13 and Second Report, Paragraph 3). We do not suggest that the Ministry should undertake large scale propagation of nursery stock, or reserve substantial areas of the Royal Parks as tree nurseries. Indeed, we consider that where the Ministry's requirements are for more than 100 specimens of a species, the Ministry should so far as possible use outside sources of supply. Where, however, the Ministry's requirements are for only a few specimens, we think it would be both suitable and economical for the Ministry to propagate its own requirements, and we have already recommended that conditions at Stud House, Hampton Court are especially suitable for the purpose.

5. In our Second Report (Paragraph 4) we referred to the necessity for protecting trees against attack from deer and other animals. Experience in the Central Parks has recently shown that protection against damage by the public, whether careless or wanton, is no less necessary. In the Broad Walk, Kensington Gardens, a number of the young Limes planted were severely damaged; and more recently young trees planted as a replacement avenue to the south of Rotten Row were also damaged. It may be difficult to reconcile robust protection with amenity,

but a relatively utilitarian guard is the minimum price which must be paid temporarily for ensuring that well grown young trees are not prevented from developing to enhance the scenery of the Parks.

6. We were asked to advise on the labelling of trees in the Royal Parks. An undertaking was given in Parliament that trees in St. James's Park would be suitably labelled. We do not think it necessary that *all* the trees should be labelled, as in an arboretum, but on the other hand we think it appropriate that rare trees and those of especial botanical interest should be labelled, and we have approved an engraved perspex label for this purpose. The label bears the common English name of the tree, with the scientific name in smaller letters underneath. We consider that labelling will be most appreciated in the Central London Parks, where there are considerable numbers of specimen trees and large numbers of the public wishing to know their names.

7. In the Appendix we give details of our recommendations on individual problems in the areas we have surveyed. A number of more general points are dealt with in the following paragraphs of the Report.

HYDE PARK AND KENSINGTON GARDENS

8. We have examined again the Central Avenue at Rotten Row, where gaps in the original Plane avenue had been filled up with Horse Chestnut. We recommend that this practice should be discontinued and the remaining gaps filled with Plane trees. We were impressed with the growth made by the young Limes planted along the Broad Walk in Kensington Gardens. We recommend that now the trees are established they should be carefully pruned and attention given particularly to the preservation of good leaders. A number of the trees show a tendency to fork too low down the main stem. Protection from the public is urgently required. Detailed recommendations are given in the Appendix.

REGENT'S PARK

9. We have examined proposals to complete the Broad Walk avenue to the north of the Drinking Fountain. The Ministry proposes to plant a row of Turkey Oak on the eastern side of the Walk: we are satisfied that this choice is appropriate.

OSBORNE

10. A fine and harmonious impression is created by a combination of the architectural character of the house, the spacious layout of the grounds, and the careful placing of the avenues and groups of trees planted for ornamental effect. The selection, and indeed the location of many of the groups, which include Holm Oaks, and Corsican, Stone and Monterey Pines, were, according to tradition, determined by the Prince Consort himself. We consider that these effects are appropriate and worthy of continuation. Apart from the ceremonial planting of specimen trees, little planting has taken place on the Estate in more recent years and many of the ornamental clumps are reaching maturity; adjacent plantings for succession are seriously needed. We noted that the sub-soil on the Estate varied from clay to light gravel and care is required to ensure that all

plantings are provided with good soil and adequate drainage. In a number of cases there appeared to be evidence of defective nutrition, particularly in the Royal Avenue, and it is recommended that experiments should be carried out to remedy this condition. We give detailed recommendations in the Appendix.

KENILWORTH CASTLE

11. The grounds of Kenilworth Castle are in the guardianship of the Ministry under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Acts. We have examined the trees, which include many fine specimens, particularly of Beech and Oak. We give detailed recommendations in the Appendix and are satisfied that there is no general need for an extensive re-planting programme for some time to come. In making our detailed recommendations, we have borne in mind the special considerations governing the maintenance of the environs of an Ancient Monument. We were shown, for example, proposals for the restoration of original features of the Estate which involve the removal of a number of trees. In addition, a number of areas are unsuitable for planting because of the existence of archaeological remains. Our recommendations ignore instances of the former type, and are modified by the latter problem. In general, however, we doubt whether well grown trees which have been allowed to occupy crevices on foundations and remains of walls need be removed unless access is desired to the remains themselves. In such cases damage to the structure has probably already been done and removal of the trees would be difficult without further damage.

LAUNCESTON CASTLE

12. Launceston Castle is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall but has been controlled and managed by the Ministry of Works since 1952.

Our attention was directed particularly to the trees on the west and south-west marginal slopes of the site. These trees grow on a steep bank which is retained on the roadside by a stone wall. This wall leans slightly outward to the road in one or two places, although we understand that no further movement has been detected in recent years. At the north end of this bank there is a group of nine Beech trees and there are three more Beeches near the south entrance gate; the remaining trees are mainly Holm Oaks (*Quercus ilex*) and Cypresses. We do not think that these trees have so far contributed to the movement of the wall which, we believe, is due to thrust from above and to the fact that this section of the wall has no weep-holes.

The Beech trees at the north end of the bank are an important feature of the Monument whether viewed from a distance towards the north-west or from the Castle itself; they should therefore be preserved as far as possible. Three of them, however, show signs of disease and it will be prudent to remove them; a fourth tree has a limb projecting towards the road which should be carefully lopped. The remaining trees seem to be in good health and to have a firm root hold. We think that they constitute a fair risk and should remain, subject to periodic inspection.

The Ministry fears that the roots of the three Beech trees near the south entrance gate are damaging the outer Castle wall. We are not convinced that this

is so but, from the point of view of landscape effect, see no objection to their being cut down if the Ministry so desires. The Cypress trees add nothing to the amenities of the site and should be removed. We consider that the Holm Oaks and the other trees might remain.

Our views on other specimen trees standing on the site are set out in the Appendix.

OSTERLEY PARK

13. We were asked to advise on the Osterley Park Estate, which is leased to the Ministry and under the management of the Bailiff of Royal Parks. The Ministry is bound to replace trees which are removed with new trees of the same species, and compliance with this obligation should ensure a satisfactory continuity of tree growth. We observed extensive damage from grazing animals in all areas of the Park to which they are admitted. Upwards of fifty trees have been damaged seriously or destroyed, and many others rendered unsightly, apparently by horses; most of the damage appears to be old, and some of the damaged trees have subsequently been protected by the Parks staff. We recommend that grazing arrangements should be reviewed in order to provide for the proper control of animals; and effective steps should be taken at once to protect the remaining trees. We give detailed recommendations in the Appendix.

BROMPTON CEMETERY

14. We were informed that the use of the Cemetery as a burial ground would be possible for only a few more years. It is therefore desirable that a planting programme should take into account the eventual status of the Cemetery, at least as a Garden of Rest, if not as a public open space. As a result of our inspection we consider that any future planting scheme should aim at relieving the rather sombre appearance of the trees and might include varieties of flowering *Malus* and *Crataegus* details of which are given in the Appendix.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

W. L. TAYLOR

July, 1956

APPENDIX

Summary of Detailed Recommendations

HYDE PARK AND KENSINGTON GARDENS

Palace Gate

The broken Horse Chestnut at the south end of the Broad Walk should be removed.

Replacement Avenue at Rotten Row

Where the existing avenue over-shades the Replacement Avenue, offending branches of the old trees should be cut back. Any dead or damaged trees in the Avenue should be replaced with similar stock.

Prince of Wales Gate

Some of the Planes next to the south carriage road are dying back. Little moisture can penetrate to the roots of these trees as the earth is either covered with asphalt or compacted. A ten-foot semi-circle should be loosened and top-dressed around the two worst trees as an experiment. The badly diseased Elm on the north side of the carriage drive slightly to the west of the gate should be removed.

OSBORNE

Sovereign's Avenue

Successive attempts at establishing a line of Holm Oak for succession have now produced a line of young trees which are not flourishing. The young trees should be staked and carefully pruned where necessary, and individual trees might be treated with appropriate fertilizers in order to establish the most effective medium for promoting growth.

Royal Entrance

While the young Beech are thriving, the entrance bears a somewhat sombre appearance; this could be relieved by planting ornamental flowering and fruiting species. Corsican Pine should be planted for succession near the Old Road Gate.

Cottage Meadow

A great improvement has been effected by the removal of shrubberies north of the Lodge Walk thus giving a sight of the meadow and the specimen Conifers planted to the south of it. The existing hedge at the north of the meadow adjacent to the Sovereign's Avenue should be replaced with Beech; and the clump of small trees immediately to the east of Osborne Cottage should be fenced from cattle.

Prince of Wales Drive

The clipped shrubberies planted by the Prince Consort to the north of the Drive entail a disproportionate amount of work in maintenance and do not present an attractive appearance; a great improvement could be effected and a considerable economy achieved by removing the surviving shrubs and laying down the area to grass. Succession should be provided for the replacement of the existing Elm Avenue to the south of the Drive by planting a new avenue to the south. The existing Lime Avenue to the north of the Drive is in poor condition and should be replaced. When the newly planted Beech hedge obscuring the car park has grown up sufficiently, the Laurels to the south of the Drive should be removed. The two specimens of *Cupressus* on each side of the Drive as it turns into the lawn in front of the main entrance are out of scale and unsuitably placed.

College Meadow

The boundary plantation on the main road should be securely fenced and not used for stacking hay. The Whitefield Clump should be fenced against cattle for regeneration and the best of the young growth selected for retention. The clumps of Cedar, Stone Pine, Monterey Pine and Holm Oak should have trees of the same species planted close at hand for succession. The Spruce should be replaced by Cedar of Lebanon as they are not flourishing. Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) should be planted in the grounds of the Old Naval College to fill up blank spaces.

Area between Swiss Cottage and Barton Road South of High Walk

Plant groups of Corsican Pine for succession to existing groups. Replace existing Birch with Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera*) as indicated. In the woodland margin to the Swiss Cottage retain the best young Oaks by careful clearing of undergrowth. Plant Cedar of Lebanon in place of Spruce as indicated. Stone Pine should be planted for succession to the south-east of Proxy Plantation. The planting of occasional *Cryptomeria japonica* might be considered.

Between Pier Road and High Walk

Replace the Pine wood on south edge of Pier Road by planting Scots Pine six feet apart but avoiding undue regularity. Prune young Turkey Oak as indicated to straighten growth. Plant Corsican Pine and Walnut (in place of poor Oaks) on the Golf Course as indicated. As resources become available, underplant Lady Wood with Beech. Plant Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*) and *Cupressus macrocarpa* for succession as indicated near the Valley Walk. Plant *Sorbus torminalis* in wood to south of Messengers Walk as indicated; prune young Ash in this wood.

The clump between the House and the Ring Walk at the Ornamental Pond should be continued by planting Monterey Pine immediately to the east of the clump.

Shore between Osborne and Bathing Piers

The over-shading of the Staff Bathing Beach could be remedied by removing the Poplars and other small trees on the seaward of the road. It should not be necessary to move the large trees beyond the road. Coastal erosion has been severe and every effort should be made to preserve the rooting system of any trees coppiced in order to consolidate the border of the shore.

Main Avenue South of Great Gatehouse

The Oak and Beech will survive together for a long period. Work should therefore be limited to lightening of Beech branches and to the removal of one stunted Oak as indicated. A replacement Oak could be planted at the north end. Next to this gap, the north-western branch of the large Beech with split bole should be carefully removed so as to conserve the shape and balance of the tree.

Road Boundary: Gatehouse to Ford

One Sycamore to be moved from the mound close to the ford. Overhanging boughs of Ash trees should be removed as indicated. It was noted that the local authority wished to construct a footpath immediately east of the Great Gatehouse; we think that this can and should be done in such a way as not to interfere with the existing trees.

Tiltyard

One Sycamore and one diseased Ash to the north of the bridge should be removed as indicated. The Sycamore should be replaced by an Oak. One Ash immediately south of the river should be removed. At the extreme south end of the Tiltyard mound two Elms should be removed and a further Elm lightened by removal of the weaker stem of a twin bole.

The Brays and Ditch to the South

Remove two Elms and one fallen Elm as indicated. Four Oaks and one Pine to be removed. The lower spreading limbs of Beech, to the south of the area intended as a car park, should be cut back to a reasonable degree before vehicles are permitted under the trees. The large well grown Oak on the slope overhanging the road on the corner south of the ford was examined. We appreciate that this is a heavy tree and could reach the road if it fell; but there is evidence that it had stood firmly anchored for many years and it is sheltered from the west. After examination we consider it a fair risk.

Little Wood

Thinning should be limited to about a dozen of the worst trees in the centre of the wood and wind breaks should be preserved on all margins. The wood might be underplanted with Beech, the spacing to be determined in relation to the ultimate appearance of the wood.

Garden to North of Keep

Most of the fruit trees are at the end of their useful life; Medlars and Quince might be introduced as in keeping with the environment. For similar reasons the main east to west walk is suitable for the establishment of a Mulberry Walk and we recommend accordingly.

LAUNCESTON CASTLE

West and South-West Banks

Remove three Beeches at the north end and lop one branch as indicated on the site. The three Beech trees near the south entrance, and all the Cyprresses, might be removed.

Motte Slope

There are a number of rather ragged Holly trees on the west side of the site. Those growing between Yew trees should be removed; others might be cut down at the Ministry's discretion. One Yew is overshadowed by Beech trees and should be taken out.

Grass cuttings should not be piled under the Beech trees or the trees are likely to die.

One branch of a Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) on the north-east side is in danger of fouling telephone wires and should be trimmed back as necessary.

The Cypress on the east side might well be removed but we see nothing to be gained by interfering with any other trees in this vicinity.

East Wall

There is a fine Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) growing on the east wall of the Castle. This is a well grown, shapely and impressive tree; it is in good health and we hope that the Ministry will avoid mutilating it when this length of wall is restored.

OSTERLEY

Public Walk to South-West of the House

The removal of trees along the south-west boundary of the leased property is not detrimental to scenery but planting of the same species should be carried out where absence of cover permits. Several existing dead trees, principally Ash, and one further Ash near the extreme south-west edge of the lower lake should be removed. Two dangerous Beeches should be removed and selected Elm suckers could be allowed to develop for succession. Sycamore seedlings should be kept under control.

Meadow South-West of the House

The main Elm avenue, running south-west from the House, is a fair risk in an area to which the public are not admitted and should be left intact for the time being, but should be carefully watched. Severe horse and cattle damage was noted, particularly of the isolated groups of trees to the west of the main House.

Ornamental Gardens to the North-West of the House

The garden contains a number of interesting specimen trees, chiefly Conifers. One diseased and dangerous Scots Pine should be removed as indicated.

Area North-East of the Main House

In addition to dead trees generally, three Elms should be removed as indicated. The group of Elms immediately to the east of the junction of the roads from Avenue and Middle Lodges is a fair risk for the time being, but should be kept under observation.

BROMPTON CEMETERY

It was reported that the Superintendent wished to remove the central line of trees at the north end of the Cemetery by the west boundary: as these trees are in most cases heavily lopped and over-shaded, we see no objection. The avenue of Common Elms along the railway wall was examined and it was considered that the trees were sufficiently far from the wall to cause no damage.

We consider the following trees suitable for future planting:

Mahus (ornamental species, including *floribunda* and *baccata*); *Sorbus aucuparia* (in var.); *Crataegus* (ornamental species); *Betula pubescens* or *verrucosa*; *Catalpa*; *Robinia*; and an occasional *Quercus ilex*.